

## Maryland Service Club Stencil Project

By Judith Wilson

The fourth grade PACE students in the Maryland Service Club at Carver Elementary School in St. Mary's County performed their last community project of the school year in early June, 2000. The students in Carver's Program of Advanced Challenge and Enrichment (PACE) applied for a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust under the direction of Carver's Instructional Resource Teacher (me). Through this authentic writing activity, the students received funding to stencil "Don't Dump" on the storm drains in the Southampton neighborhood around their school. Students learned about the importance to "Save the Bay" in this community project. [Best practices:](#)

- While walking to their small Title I elementary school, many students had noticed trash in the gutters near the storm drains. It was not until our club's discussion about the environment and ways to save the Bay that the students realized that this debris along their sidewalks would eventually wash into and contaminate the Bay that was less than three miles away.
- The fourth graders through their PACE Maryland Service Club applied the economic concepts they had been studying to a real world situation- an obvious environment problem in their Southampton community. They became the human resources who used capital resources (paint and stencils) to provide a service (stenciling the storm drains) for their school's community. In doing so, they learned the importance of environmental preservation as well.
- The students first had to analyze the potential environment danger in their community. The club's discussion focused on the questions asked in the Chesapeake Bay Trust's grant application. Through the authentic grant writing process, each student had a part to complete within the grant application. After providing the service, the students wrote reflections in their learning logs. One student responded, "I learned that stenciling the words "Don't Dump" on the neighborhood's storm drains receives good comments. I felt good when both the Chesapeake Bay Trust and the County Commissioners approved our project. I hope that other kids are not afraid to help their school or community." Students also sent their reflections to the Chesapeake Bay Trust to fulfill their grant requirements.
- The students themselves wrote the grant to receive funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The club members always run each Maryland Service Club meeting by following scripts which allow them to role play according to parliamentary procedure.
- The students along with the school's DARE officer went out in the Southampton community to stencil storm drains. They had asked permission from the Board of Public Works as well as the County Commissioners before embarking on this project. Via this grant, they have established a working relationship with the Chesapeake Bay Trust.
- Parent's permission was obtained prior to the student service learning project. Because the club had to apply for a grant, they had to prepare an action plan for the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Students always fill out an action plan for every monthly service project.
- The club members learned how the trash is washed into the bay via storm drains and how such contaminants affect the health of the bay and its inhabitants. The students also "live and breathe" such economic concepts as human, natural, and capital resources when providing goods and services as they perform student service-learning projects.

